

Transportation for Workers with Disabilities:

Widening Your Pool of Potential Talent

Workers with disabilities are valued employees in businesses across the United States. And in the coming years, the number of businesses benefiting from the skills and abilities of people with disabilities will increase for a variety of reasons:

- **Demographic shifts:** A high rate of workers are expected to retire over the next decade. Recruiting and retaining workers with disabilities is one strategy to counter the effects of an aging and shrinking workforce.
- **Bottom line benefits:** Employing people with disabilities makes good business sense. They are natural problem solvers who help businesses gain a competitive edge through innovative thinking. Furthermore, they mirror an important and increasingly expanding customer base.¹
- **Social responsibility:** A workplace inclusive of people with disabilities demonstrates a company's commitment to all residents of its community. Furthermore, consumers favor businesses that employ people with disabilities. In fact, 92 percent of consumers surveyed in the National Survey of Consumer Attitudes toward Companies that Hire Individuals with Disabilities felt more favorable toward companies that hire people with disabilities, and 87 percent preferred to give their business to those companies.²

Transportation for Workers with Disabilities

Employees with disabilities often use the same types of transportation options as their non-disabled peers.

1 The Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor [www.dol.gov/odep] supports the development of disability-related policy and practices and addresses transportation issues as part of those policies.

2 Siperstein GN, Romano N, Mohler A, et al. National Survey of Consumer Attitudes Toward Companies that Hire Individuals with Disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 24: 3-9, 2006

For those who cannot use regularly scheduled transit services, however, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires federally funded transit agencies to provide equivalent type paratransit services that complement those services.

To facilitate the commute of employees with disabilities, companies can

- Encourage ridesharing via carpool or vanpool for employees with disabilities who may not be able to use public transportation or whose work shifts do not correspond with public transportation schedules³
- Whenever possible, provide preferential parking, located near entrances served by elevators, for employees with disabilities who share rides to work
- Provide information about ADA complementary paratransit eligibility and local services to employees with disabilities
- Understand the need for flexible work schedules for employees with disabilities who ride ADA complementary paratransit services to work
- Identify options for purchasing, leasing, or retrofitting company vehicles so they can be used by all employees. Some federal tax benefits can help (see below).
- Partner with other local employers to encourage local transportation providers to increase schedules or extend routes that serve your business location⁴

Helping Employees with Disabilities Use Available Transportation Options

3 See Fact Sheet #7: [Strength in Numbers: Why Employers Should Encourage Ridesharing](#).

4 See Fact Sheet #2: [The Power of Partnerships: Joining Forces to Improve Business and the Environment](#).

Your employees who have a disability may benefit from receiving one-on-one education about how to use existing transit services. This type of training will give them the ability to use transit services with confidence.

For example, many local transit agencies provide *travel orientation* for any rider. It is usually delivered in-person and shows riders how to navigate a particular agency's system. It also informs them about any accommodations the system offers. Check with your local transit agency for more information.

Travel training is intensive instruction designed to teach people with disabilities to travel safely and independently using public transportation in their community, when appropriate. To locate a travel trainer, contact the Association of Travel Instruction (www.travelinstruction.org). Also note that Easter Seals Project ACTION teaches travel trainers how to train customers as well as other trainers (<http://www.projectaction.org>).

Tax Incentives for Improving Transportation Access to Your Facility⁵

Two tax incentives assist businesses to adapt their facilities to be more accessible to customers and

⁵ Learn more about the tax benefits for businesses who have employees with disabilities from the IRS website. <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=185704,00.html>

workers with disabilities. The Disabled Access Tax Credit allows eligible small businesses (gross receipts of \$1 million or less or having 30 or fewer employees) to deduct up to 50 percent of "eligible access expenditures" (maximum benefit of \$5,000) for a taxable year to remove architectural, communication, physical, or transportation barriers that prevent a business from being accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The Tax Deduction to Remove Architectural and Transportation Barriers to People with Disabilities and Elderly Individuals allows any size business to deduct from taxable income up to \$15,000 for expenditures to make a facility or public transportation vehicle owned or leased in connection with a trade or business more accessible to individuals who have disabilities or are elderly.

Examples of deductions include

- Providing accessible parking spaces, ramps, and curb cuts
- Making telephones, water fountains, and restrooms accessible to people using wheelchairs
- Making walkways at least 48 inches wide
- Providing accessible entrances to buildings, including stairs and floors

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The "Transportation Toolkit for the Business Community" gives businesses the information they need now to assist their employees in achieving a timely, cost-efficient commute that promotes their productivity and job satisfaction. View other fact sheets and resources at www.ctaa.org/transportation_to_work for information on how to access transportation-related tax benefits, partner with local providers to find answers to employees' and customers' transportation needs, become part of a transportation management association, and more.

This toolkit was created by the Community Transportation Association of America's Joblinks Employment Transportation Initiative—serving communities since 1993 in solving employment transportation issues.